

## THE

Vol. I.

No. 1.

Agreeably to the original proposals, it is the fixed purpose of the Editor, to conduct this periodical publication wholly upon the principles of morality and religion, and to entertain his readers with instructive sentimental essays, upon experimental and practical subjects. It is no part of his intention to run into the theorems of the schools, or into the speculative questions of theoretical divinity, which have a greater tendency to foment disputation or polemical discussions, than to promote genuine

virtue and the essential principles of truth. It is his sincere wish and purpose to avoid every thing of the kind, and to check a practice, which, when traced to its end, so frequently terminates in an ambiguity, sophism, and a strife about words and the meaning of words. In such cases, whether they begin on the principles of DES CARTES, with universal doubt, that in the end they may arrive at conviction; or on the principles of HUME with hypothesis to end with universal doubt; the natural tendency thereof is to produce scepticism of the one kind or the other. It has been unfortunate for the cause of Christianity, that its professed advocates have so frequently departed from the plain artless method of supporting it. Instead of shewing its internal evidences, its supernatural influences, its excellent morality, and its happy effects upon the hearts and lives of its subjects, both in prosperity and adversity, and even in the trying hour of death, which form the true christian philosophy; they have too often sought to impose it on men by dogmatical and arbitrary positions, enforced by positive denunciations of anathemas, in case there should be a refusal or hesitation to receive, with implicit faith, the hypothesis laid down, although ever so absurd and unintelligible, and whether compatible with human reason and common sense or not; or making religion to consist principally in certain modes, forms, orders, and speculative opinions, at least more than in the virtuous benevolent rectitude of the heart, morality of life, and the daily practice of piety, flowing from the voluntary exercise of a rational unfeigned faith in the Redeemer of men, and from the full persuasion and conviction of mind, of the truth and divinity of the gospel of the grace of God.

“Those who consider virtue as a mere speculative curiosity, and think that the principles of morality and religion ought to be explained with the same degree of apathy and indifference, as we would explain the properties of conic sections, and they who would make the perfection of religion consist in metaphysical abstruse reasoning, and they who imperiously insist upon an impli-

cit faith in certain human inventions, creeds and opinions, as though they were divine, as being all-sufficient, without a particular respect to experimental and practical religion, will probably find matter for censure in the pages of the Cabinet. The Editor is not very ambitious of the good opinion of those philosophical theorists and speculative theologians, who would philosophize religion and morality out of the world, or reduce them to a mere theoretical system of science; neither will he give himself much trouble to apologize for what, to them, may have the appearance of keenness, reproof or censure, on the principles of scepticism, infidelity and licentiousness, and upon those theories and systems, which in their tendency are calculated to subvert the essential truths of the gospel, with respect to faith, experience, good works and morality. He considers *happiness* as the aim and end of our being; and he thinks philosophy, with all the train of literature, arts and sciences, in the variety of languages, theories and systems, whether natural, moral, or theological, valuable, only so far as they may be conducive to this end. Human happiness seemeth to him wholly unattainable, except by the means which virtue, morality and religion provide. He is therefore persuaded, that while employed in pleading the cause of religion, and recommending it in all its precepts, promises, and beneficial effects, in civilizing and moralizing men, and making them virtuous and happy, he supports, in some measure, the character of a friend to human kind.

However suspicious the Editor may be of his ability to vindicate, and successfully to recommend the all-important cause of religion, he is not at all suspicious of his intention. He feels that on such a subject, he must speak from the heart; and his sincerity might be extremely doubtful, if the warmth of his zeal and solicitude should not bear some proportion to the importance of the cause. He would wish to promote a spirit of catholicism among all the genuine friends of religion, and to cultivate amity and a good understanding with all the servants and followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, both of the clergy and laity, of every

denomination. He therefore invites them to patronise and aid his sincere endeavours to promote the essential truths and excellent principles of the *Christian philosophy*. He would thankfully receive any extracts, or original essays, experimental or practical narratives, accounts of pious lives and happy deaths, and of God's gracious and providential dealings with his people: ever so short accounts will be very acceptable:

He hopes that the numbers of the CABINET will afford pious minds a treasure, once a week, that will richly reward them for their expence and trouble of procuring and reading them.

The Editor promises to use his best endeavours to make the CABINET pleasing and profitable to Christians of all denominations. He wishes his ability was equal to his intentions; he hopes for assistance from his literary and pious friends and subscribers. He prays for the blessing of God upon his endeavours, and that he and all his readers may, through faith and patience, obtain the *promise of God in Jesus Christ*.

THE EDITOR.

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#### REFLECTIONS ON NEW-YEAR'S-DAY.

O ye circling periods of Time, which, with swift succession, measure out our day and year; once more, in obedience to your Maker's command, you have performed your annual course; and in language more forcible than all the arts of eloquence, you invite unthinking mortals to the serious reflection of having another year less to spend on earth.

Time, that precious gift of heaven, is too valuable to slip away unnoticed. However unmindful the gay and busy multitude may be of this valuable gift, yet let them remember, each moment, with which they are entrusted, will be brought to their account in that day, "when God shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness." What gratitude do we, who are spared to see the commencement of this year, owe that being, who has preserved



our lives through such imminent dangers; while thousands of our fellow-creatures have been summoned from this state of trial, to prove the realities of an eternal world! And have we merited this favour from his hands? Is it our holiness of heart, or devotedness to his service, which has caused him thus to deal with us? Rather, is it not a continuation of that *rich mercy* and *long-suffering*, which have been exercised in our behalf from our infancy to the present period? Not one moment of our lives can we recal which has not been marked with peculiar instances of his care over us. We have been fed by his Bounty, supported by his Providence, and protected by his almighty Arm. What but his sovereign power could have kept in existence, so long, this wonderful machine, composed of so many parts, and wrought up to such a curious texture? His hand alone fashioned the clay tabernacle; and destined it to be a kind of vehicle for that immortal part with which we are entrusted. What can we render this glorious Author of our existence? Can any sacrifice be too great for Him, to whom we are indebted for every comfort we enjoy? O may the retrospect of past mercies excite us to new diligence, and greater activity and zeal for the Lord of Hosts! This year may be our last! Perhaps ere we see a twelfth part of it, death may have received his commission to plunge his fatal arrow into our bosoms. Have we seriously considered what it is to die? Are we certain of an house not made with hands, when this frail covering shall be dissolved? Is our inheritance made sure by the experimental knowledge that Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us? If this be the happy state of our souls, we need not fear the vicissitudes of earthly things; nor need we be anxious whether we shall live another day, another hour, or another moment. If Christ is our portion, all is well, living or dying.

“This only portion, Lord, be mine,  
Be mine this better part.”

## THE PLAY-HOUSE THE SCHOOL OF VICE.

WHEN Sir Matthew Hale, the Lord Chief Justice in the Court of King's Bench, was a student at Oxford, we are informed that he was induced to attend the exhibitions of the stage, contrary to his better judgment. It was not long, however, before he discovered that, in proportion as these entertainments gained upon his affections, his habits of seriousness relaxed, and his plans of study were disconcerted. He saw that his temporal prospects were in imminent danger of being intercepted, and above all, his religious principles of being loosened and eradicated. He therefore made a vow, "That he would never see a Play more;" and it redounds to his honour, that the vow which he made at Oxford, he never violated through the course of his life.

The example of Sir Matthew Hale, cannot be too earnestly recommended to the imitation of the youth of both sexes, who wish to preserve the principles of chastity and sobriety. It is the imperious duty of every parent, who wishes to promote the present peace and future happiness of his children, to warn them against the baneful consequences of attending the play-house. If it be concluded that harmless satisfaction may be found in the charms of music and poetry, in specimens of refined sentiment, and in the elocution, yet, it is certain that, the gratification arising from these sources may be too dearly bought. When all the circumstances which are inseparably connected with modern play-houses, are gravely considered, it is not possible that any man, who pretends to religion, can recommend the sober young man, or unspotted virgin, to attend such places. In the present times, profaneness and immorality of various kinds are interwoven in the very constitution of a dramatic exhibition, and are vitally essential to its success and popularity.

Names do not alter the nature of good and evil. The boundaries of virtue and vice, of religion and profaneness, are

marked by a clear line of distinction. We do not scruple to declare our pointed reprobation of the pretended morality of modern plays. Did we wish to root up from the mind, every religious and moral principle, to tempt our daughters to barter away the brightest jewel of their sex ; to inflame the passions of our sons, and abandon them to their lawless empire ; did we wish our children to be more familiar with crime, to harden and inure them to scenes of blasphemy, cruelty, revenge, and prostitution, we would invite them to attend the most popular plays, which are now performed on the stage ; we would send them for instruction to the *German School*, where vice is decked out in the garb of virtue ; where a casual act of generosity is applauded, whilst obvious and commanded duties are to be trampled on, and a fit of charity is made the sponge to wipe out every sin, and the substitute of every virtue : We would invite them to the plays of *Pizarro*, the *Stranger*, and *John Bull*, where the spurious virtues are blazoned out, whilst those which are genuine are thrown into the back ground and degraded. In the one, is a bold and *sentimental* strumpet, whom the passions of lust and jealousy prompt to follow the adventures of her paramour. In the other, an adultress, who had forsaken her amiable husband, and lived in criminal commerce with her seducer. In the last, the daughter of an humble tradesman suffers herself to be seduced by the son of a baronet, flies from the roof of her most affectionate father, and afterwards is united in marriage to the despoiler of her virtue. To the shame and disgrace of the age in which we live, these three women are the prominent characters of the respective pieces, and instead of being held up as warnings to others, they are made the objects of sympathy, esteem, and admiration!

## ANECDOTE.

Mr. Heywood being brought into the greatest want of the necessaries of life, told his wife, one day, that he would leave with her and the children, three shillings, which was all the money he had in the world, and would try to get some work as a day-labourer. After commending them to God, and praying for divine direction, he called at a number of houses the first day, but could not meet with any employment. He spent the first night in a barn, and was engaged in prayer the greatest part of it. In the morning he again set out with an empty stomach ; and soon arrived at Lord ——'s, where he enquired of the servants if a labourer was wanted ? They answered, " No." As he was returning, however, from the hall, one of the servant girls said, the shepherd had just before left his place, and if he understood how to take care of sheep, she thought he might meet with employment. Mr. Heywood immediately engaged in the service ; and was informed he was to sleep in a little cot erected for the shepherds, at some distance from the house ; but that he was to come, once a day, for what he wanted, to the hall. A few mornings after, two of the servant girls, apparently by accident, rose two hours before the usual time, and as there was no one at hand to fetch up the cows, they went into the field for them. But when they drew near to the shepherd's hut, they were struck with the sound of a man's voice, and, to their no small astonishment, found it was that of the shepherd engaged in prayer to God. At this they were much affected, and, for several weeks, unknown to Mr. Heywood, they used to rise at four o'clock to go to the cot to hear the shepherd pray, which exercise he was wont to be engaged in every morning till five o'clock. After Mr. Heywood had been in this situation a few weeks, the lady of the family was taken ill, and was expected to die. A clergyman was sent for, but was that moment mounting his horse with a view to spend the day in hunting. However, he sent



his compliments, and said that he would wait on her ladyship that evening. Lord —— seemed much distressed, and expressed an earnest desire to get some one to pray with his lady. Then one of the servants who had listened to Mr. Heywood's prayers, said, "I wish your lordship would consent to let your shepherd be fetched to pray with her ladyship," adding, "for I do not believe that there is a man in the world who can pray like him." "The shepherd pray? What! can the shepherd pray?" "Yes, my lord, and I wish you would condescend to let him be sent for, and then you will hear him yourself." Mr. Heywood was immediately called, and his lordship asked him if he could pray? to which he replied, "That man who cannot pray, is not fit to live!"—"Well," says his lordship, "follow me and pray for my lady who is at the point of death." After a few words spoken to her ladyship, Mr. Heywood poured out his soul to that God whose he was, and whom he served, and immediately his prayer was answered. For with astonishment she cried out: "Is this a man or an angel? for I am quite well!" When prayer was concluded, Lord —— asked him whether he was not one of the ejected ministers? and Mr. Heywood acknowledged that he was. His lordship then declared, that from that moment, instead of being employed as the shepherd of his sheep, he should be the shepherd of his soul, and of the souls of his household.

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*Anecdote of Mr. Wm. Berrisford.*

EVERY one who has the good of men at heart, will do all in his power to bring them out of the way of sin and misery, into the way of holiness and happiness. This work does not require great talents. A word spoken in simplicity may be made a great blessing. The following anecdote may encourage such as wish to be useful upon all occasions.

As Mr. Berrisford was going to divine worship on a Lord's-day evening, he was overtaken by several thoughtless young men, who were rambling about for amusement; a practice too common on that blessed day. One of them said to another, "Where are you going?" He replied, looking forward to a man just before them, "I'll follow that fellow, for he knows the road to every place." Mr. Berrisford turning round, said, in a very serious way, "It is well if he knows the road to heaven." The young men then passed on, and nothing more was said; nor did Mr. Berrisford hear what effect his words had had till several years had elapsed; when, having to preach at a place about ten miles from home, he met with the man, of whom it was said, "That fellow knows the road to every place." The man came up to him after preaching, and said, after relating to Mr. Berrisford the long-forgotten circumstance, "Your words made a deep impression upon my mind. I tho't, what, have I lived till now, and do not know the road to heaven? This led me to enquire after the road, and, blessed be God, I have found it to the joy of my soul." The man is now proceeding on this blessed road, and, it is probable, those few words of Mr. Berrisford will be instrumental of his eternal salvation. "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days," Eccles. xi. 1.

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*An Anecdote, illustrative of the great Christian duty of forgiving injuries.*

THE practice of this Christian virtue is often recommended in the sacred scriptures, both by example and precept. The example of Jesus Christ is frequently exhibited therein, for the imitation of Christians. And St. Paul exhorts the church at Ephesus, to be followers of God, Eph. v. 1. The connection in which these words are found, sufficiently determines their application. The apostle having said, in the last verse of the

preceding chapter, "Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you;" adds, in the verse above referred to, "Be ye followers," imitators, "of God as his dear children," i. e. in forgiving injuries, or offences.

The following anecdote will farther elucidate this important duty. "A person in high life once went to Sir Eardley Wilmot, Knt. late Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, under the impression of great wrath and indignation at a real injury, which he had received from a person high in the political world, and which he was meditating how to resent in the most effectual manner. After relating the particulars, he asked Sir Eardley, if he did not think it would be *manly* to resent it? "Yes," said this ornament to the bench, "It will be *manly* to resent it; but it will be *godlike* to forgive it." The gentleman declared, that this had such an instantaneous effect upon him, that he came away quite a different man, and in a totally different temper from that in which he went."

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EXTRACT.

REAL Christians find, that as soon as they apply themselves to KNOW what is *comprehensible* in the sacred scriptures, and to a sincere endeavour to DO what is *practicable*, so soon as FAITH in its INCOMPREHENSIBLE doctrines is produced, then is fulfilled *he that doth the will of God shall know of the doctrines whether they be of God.*

The DIVINE SPIRIT concurs with the outward revelation in changing a man's *sceptical* disposition, and then he is *fixed*: otherwise he would be as ready as ever to embrace the first *plausible* argument against the gospel.

We have some, who, by their mere *notional* knowledge of revelation, the *outward testimony* to Christianity, disbelieve the

reality or necessity of any acquaintance with the *inward testimony*, by which the DIVINE SPIRIT produces a serious spiritual frame, fitting the soul to receive the sanctifying impressions of an *outward* revelation. They think that reading of sacred scripture and forming from thence right notions of Christianity, *in order* to TALK of it, with a going the round of common duties, and a not being guilty of common sins, is the *whole of the Christian* religion, and all the meetness that is necessary for heaven. A serious heavenly frame, suitable to the true notion of revelation, has no place in them; they ridicule it in others, and name it affectation, rather than any real part of Christianity.

An ingenious mind may argue for GOD against the Atheist; for CHRIST against the Socinian; and for the outward testimony of the Spirit of Christ against the Deist; and he himself be no *real Christian*: but no person can well display this inward testimony of Christ in the soul, without the *experience* of it.

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From KNOX'S Christian Philosophy.

#### OF A GOOD HEART.

THE most desirable treasure which a human being can possess, whether he has regard to his own happiness or to those around him, is a GOOD HEART. In every situation, and under all circumstances, this will furnish a store of sweets which the wicked cannot obtain; and delicious though it is, would not relish, so vitiated is their taste. A good heart communicates liberally the pleasures it enjoys; blessed or blessing in every emotion.

But what constitutes a good heart? The grace of God operating upon it. The mild, gentle, healing spirit of the gospel; or, to use the language of scripture, the UNCTION of the HOLY GHOST, mollifying its hardness, and preserving it from corruption. This it is which forms a good heart, and a good



heart is a land of Canaan to itself, a land flowing with milk and honey.

All the irascible passions are, in their excess, diabolical.— They are the fruitful sources of misery. They would unparadise the garden of Eden, and turn the cheerful light of heaven into gloomy darkness, like the shadow in the valley of death. There is in the world much natural evil; there are pains, and diseases enough, to wean the heart from the immoderate love of it; but none of them are productive of wretchedness so great and difficult of cure as the malignant passions of pride, envy and revenge. These estrange man from man, and convert the haunts of human creatures into dens of foxes and wolves. Cheats, calumniators, robbers, murderers, in all their variety and degrees of flagitiousness, are characters naturally flowing from hearts unsoftened, unenlightened, unhallowed by the Spirit of Grace.

But behold the Christian. Gentleness and sweetness beam from his eyes, and illuminate his countenance with a mild lustre. Good humour predominates in all his demeanour. He has no concealed rage rankling in his bosom; he has no sinister and selfish views, under a studied openness of countenance. He converses with a generous frankness. His bosom is transparent. You are perfectly safe with him. He will serve you, if possible, as well as please you; but he will never injure you purposely, or give you the smallest pain. He feels complacency in all the good he sees around him, and delights in augmenting it. His treasure is within him. His interest is in heaven. His ambition is for objects above the world; so that nothing in it is of value enough, in his estimation, to tempt him to resign the tranquility of innocence, to renounce the pleasures of a friendly and benevolent disposition. He has all the ingenuous simplicity of the infantine age, and you delight in him, as in the harmless babe, who sports around you, and expresses his pains and pleasures according to the dictates of uncorrupted nature.

Such is man, when his natural asperities are smoothed, and his inborn bitterness sweetened by the benign operation of celestial influence. Compared with the mere natural man, he is an angel. Is it not desirable thus to raise human nature, and thus to improve society; thus to render the earthly existence almost an anticipation of what our imperfect imaginations picture of the heavenly? Heathen philosophy cannot effect it.—Heathen philosophy is confined to a few, in comparison with the myriads that compose the great mass of human beings: who weary themselves in pursuit of happiness on this terraqueous globe. The experiment has been tried by the philosophers of all ages, and failed. But religion can effect it. Yet what religion? A religion founded on historical faith, and heathen mythology? No; it must be a vital religion—a divine influence on the heart, which is plainly promised and announced in the glad tidings of the gospel. This is the true *evangelion*, or GOOD NEWS, to the human race. It is authenticated by the written gospel, and there is a witness within us which renders it unquestionable. Happy they who have obeyed the voice which commands, saying, “My son, give me thy HEART!” When the heart is devoted to Christ, the understanding will make no resistance to his doctrines, but humbly acknowledge the most inexplicable mysteries to be above, yet not contrary to reason.

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NOTE.

The Editor feels grateful for the very liberal encouragement he has received, and returns his sincere thanks to those gentlemen who have interested themselves in obtaining subscribers for the CABINET. He wishes to note to his Patrons, that he was disappointed in obtaining a supply of such paper as it was his intention to have printed the Cabinet on, when he issued his proposals for eight pages, which delayed the publication till the present time. The paper being inferior to what he intened, he has given double the number of pages, which he hopes his subscribers will receive as an ample compensation. It will therefore make a volume in six months, which will be two volumes instead of one in a year. At the end of each volume will be given a title page and table of contents.

## Poetry.

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### A REVIEW OF THE MERCIES OF GOD.

TO Thee, blest source of all my joy,  
While sacred themes my mind employ,  
I chaunt a serious song;  
O tune my feeble voice to raise  
The accents of melodious praise,  
Which to thy name belong.

Form'd by the plastic hand divine,  
In thy bright image, Lord, to shine,  
And wisdom's paths to tread:  
The world I enter'd weak and small,  
Obnoxious to the ills that fall  
On *Childhood's* helpless head.

Yet thy great favour clos'd me round,  
While *Youth*, (with ample mercies crown'd)  
To vig'rous *Manhood* grew:  
The lessons of thy saving grace,  
Thy goodness taught me soon to trace,  
And ardently pursue.

My nature's sad deprav'd estate,  
My actual sin's enormous weight,  
With clear conviction shone:  
I trembled at the awful sight,  
And mourn'd, in pain, my piteous plight,  
Before thy gracious throne.

But, glory to thy heavenly name!  
Mercy—transcendant mercy came,  
And rescued me from woe,

Bade all my guilty fears subside,  
 In thy rich righteousness confide,  
 And wash me white as snow.

What sacred peace my soul possess'd,  
 When, with thy pardoning favour bless'd,  
 I, joyful, call'd thee *mine* !  
 My heart in grateful transport glow'd,  
 And floods of praise with rapture flow'd,  
 To thank the name divine.

O may I wisely still pursue,  
 (With Jesus in my faithful view,)  
 The straight and narrow way,  
 That leads from sin's destructive snares,  
 From carnal joys and anxious cares,  
 To realms of endless day.

And when my life's short span is run,  
 When every earthly labour's done,  
 Receive my soul to reign  
 Where glorious saints their powers employ  
 In songs of sweet harmonious joy,  
 With all thy heavenly train!

While all the angelic army sings,  
 "*Hosanna to the King of kings!*"  
 I'll tune the living lyre;  
 And join the vast triumphant throng,  
 In chaunting forth the heavenly song,  
 Which never shall expire!

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☞ Gentlemen holding subscription papers are requested to deliver them to the publisher without delay.

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